

# **DSW grad appointed to national governing board of the Alliance of Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health**

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Tulane [Doctor of Social Work](#) (DSW) alumna Marilyn Barge, DSW, LSW, has been appointed as a governing board member for the Alliance of Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health (AIECMH) at the national level. An active member of the National Association of Black Social Workers (NABSW) and an early childhood social worker for the School District of Philadelphia, Dr. Barge has been supporting families and children affected by poverty and aiding professionals in identifying and addressing the mental health needs of young children and their families for nearly two decades.

“Many young children and the professionals who support them face significant barriers in accessing the resources they need to address mental health and wellness,” Dr. Barge said. “The system often lacks sufficient support for those who work directly with children and families, particularly when it comes to infant and early childhood mental health. This is an issue not only in the United States but globally.”

In this newly appointed role, Dr. Barge will have the opportunity to make a lasting impact on national efforts to improve mental health outcomes for young children. Their work will involve advocating for policies that prioritize early childhood mental health, expanding access to resources for professionals in the field, and ensuring that children in every community—especially underserved areas—receive the care and attention they need.

The early years of a child’s life are critical to their overall development, and the importance of supporting mental and emotional health during this time cannot be overstated. Research has consistently shown that early experiences—both positive and negative—can have long-lasting effects on a child’s mental health and future success. By addressing mental health concerns in infancy and early childhood, the likelihood of overcoming potential developmental delays and mental health issues later in life is significantly increased.

“This work is meaningful because it directly impacts the lives of vulnerable children and their families, and it aligns with my commitment to social change and advocacy,” said Dr. Barge. “The AIECMH, a leading national organization, is committed to promoting the mental health and emotional well-being of infants, toddlers, and young children. The organization works to build a strong foundation for early childhood mental health through advocacy, education, and research. It

provides a platform for professionals working in early childhood education, pediatric health care, mental health services, and child welfare to collaborate and ensure that children's mental health needs are met."

Dr. Barge's appointment to the AIECMH board highlights their deep commitment to advancing the field of infant and early childhood mental health. She will work closely with other board members to shape national policies, improve training programs for professionals, and help increase awareness about the importance of mental health support for children from birth to age five. She will also help bridge gaps in access to services, ensuring that professionals have the training and resources they need to support children from diverse backgrounds. Her leadership will play a key role in raising awareness about how mental health support during these formative years can have a profound and positive impact on both children and families.

"As social workers, we've always been at the forefront of advocating for social justice, especially for those at risk, such as young children and families—particularly children of color or those facing economic challenges. Standing on the foundation of Tulane's School of Social Work model, I feel compelled to be part of the solution to these systemic challenges," Dr. Barge said.